



G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center

to care for him who shall have borne the battle and his widow, and orphan

FOCUSED ON YOU

MISSION ACT

MAY 2019

**New eligibility criteria a major improvement
over existing rules**

VA MISSION Act

VA's new eligibility criteria
for community care, providing
more choices for Veterans.

The VA **MISSION Act** puts Veterans and their needs at the center of their care. Through it, VA will:

- Provide you with more options for health care,
- Offer an improved community care process,
- Provide a new urgent care option,
- Help you get access to the care you need at the right place at the right time,
- Offer you great service through a nationwide network of high-quality care,
- Provide more Veteran-to-Veteran peer specialists,
- Expand the program to support Veteran caregivers.

Through the **MISSION Act**, VA now has additional opportunities to enhance our high-quality health care to our nation's Veterans.

What does the MISSION acronym stand for?

Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening
Integrated Outside Networks

You can read the **MISSION Act** online at this link:

<https://www.va.gov/oei/missionAct/index.asp>

WHAT IS THE MISSION ACT?

The **MISSION Act** puts Veterans at the center of care to coordinate their care whether it's at a VA facility or in partnership through a community provider.

The VA **MISSION Act**:

Improves community care

Expands eligibility for Caregiver Support

Enhances VA's ability to recruit and retain top notch employees

Strengthens VA's building infrastructure

KEY ELEMENTS

Access to Care

VA offers same day services for Mental Health and Primary Care at all sites across the country.

Improves Community Care

The **MISSION Act** streamlines VA community care programs making it easier to navigate, for Veterans, their families, community providers, and VA employees.

Expand Eligibility for Caregiver Support

The **MISSION Act** expands eligibility for VA's Caregiver program. It will now include eligible Veterans from all eras of service. The expansion will occur in two phases. The first starts with those who were injured on or before May 7, 1975. Further expansion will occur two years later. The expansion timeline is still under development.

Strengthen VA's Infrastructure

The Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) process in the **MISSION Act** will provide VA the necessary flexibility to improve older buildings, bringing them in line with modern standards to help us support new and high tech equipment.

Strengthen VA's Ability to Recruit and Retain

VA is focused on recruiting top notch health care experts to ensure Veterans are receiving the care they have earned. This Act will allow for a new scholarship program, greater access to VA's education debt-reduction program and improved flexibility for providing bonuses for recruitment, relocation and retention.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the VA MISSION Act?

The VA **MISSION Act** is legislation passed by Congress and signed into law on June 6, 2018. Through this VA will need to make changes in several key areas including:

- Streamlining and Improving Community Care,
- Establishing a new Urgent Care benefit,
- Expanding Caregivers Eligibility,
- Strengthening VA's Workforce,
- and Strengthening VA's Infrastructure.

Through the **MISSION Act**, VA has additional opportunities to enhance our high-quality health care to our nation's Veterans.

Is the MISSION Act about privatizing Veterans' health care?

No, it's not about privatizing VA. The MISSION Act is designed to strengthen and improve VA's high-quality health care system.

What does the MISSION Act encompass?

The MISSION Act legislation contains more than 50 sections intended to strengthen and improve VA's ability to deliver world-class health care. As this is complex and will take place for several years, we have a visual graphic depicting how it will work. You can find the handout at this link:

https://www.va.gov/oei/docs/MISSION_Act_Placemat.pdf.

If you're interested in learning more you can read through the handout entitled MISSION ACT 101: How the law will improve VA's ability to deliver health care to Veterans on VA's VAntage Point blog located at: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/56414/mission-act-101-how-the-law-will-improve-vas-ability-to-deliver-health-care-to-veterans/>.

How will the VA MISSION Act Improve Community Care?

VA community care programs have grown in number and complexity through the years, making them complicated. The MISSION Act streamlines and improves VA's community care programs, providing Veterans better customer service when receiving community care.

How will the VA MISSION Act expand Caregivers Eligibility?

The VA MISSION Act expands eligibility for Veterans who have family members serve as their caregivers. Right now, the Caregiver program is only available to eligible Veterans who were injured on or after September 11, 2001. But, the expansion under the MISSION Act will open the program to eligible Veterans and their caregivers from all eras.

What are the key benefits for recruiting and retaining high quality staff under the MISSION Act?

Key benefits for employees under the MISSION Act include:

- Providing several options to help recruit and retain employees through an expanded education debt reduction program,
- Improving flexibility for recruitment bonuses,
- Allowing for relocation and retention pay so we can keep high-quality medical professionals,
- Piloting a scholarship program for eligible Veterans to receive medical training in return for serving in a VA hospital or clinic for four years.

How will the VA MISSION Act strengthen VA's Infrastructure?

Many VA buildings are nearly 60 years old and half of them were built before 1920. We need ways to ensure we can keep up with the changes to technol-

VA's High Quality of Care:

- A 2018 RAND study found VA health care performed similarly or better than the private sector. The study was issued by an American nonprofit organization that analyzes national inpatient and outpatient quality of care measures.
- A 2019 Dartmouth College study found the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) may provide better care than the private sector in every local area. It also found VA health care was significantly better than non-VA care in 14 out of 15 quality and patient safety indicators.

Frequently Asked Questions—Continued from page 3

ogy and building improvements as we modernize our systems. That's why the MISSION Act offers reviews and plans to help VA better manage its infrastructure.

When will the MISSION Act be implemented?

VA is already developing processes for a multi-year effort, including plans to keep all of us informed each step of the way. We are excited to improve access to VA's high-quality care and reaffirm our commitment to America's Veterans.

How will the MISSION Act benefit Veterans?

The MISSION Act empowers Veterans and enhances care options. VA will:

- Continue to be a trusted, caring partner
- Meet Veterans where they are, with the right care at the right place and the right time

- Provide telehealth in their home, in a VA facility, or in the community
- Focus on providing an excellent experience for Veterans and their families.

How will the MISSION Act benefit VA staff members?

The MISSION Act empowers employees and strengthens VA care nationwide. The MISSION Act:

- Improves ways to hire staff and keep staff onboard
- Creates "Anywhere to Anywhere" telehealth linking Veterans with their care teams across state lines
- Allows VA to lead with cutting-edge technology
- Strengthens VA as a leader for U.S. health care

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